

F

42

I8G5

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap.

Spright No.

Shelf

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA





THE
ISLES OF SHOALS
IN SUMMER TIME.

WILLIAM LEONARD GAGE.



THE
ISLES OF SHOALS
IN
SUMMER TIME.

BY
WILLIAM LEONARD GAGE.

— • • • —

HARTFORD:
THE CASE, LOCKWOOD & BRAINARD CO.
1875.

17
E v

[COPYRIGHT SECURED.]

F²
J. 165

TO MY
HEALTHY, ATHLETIC, AND KINDLY BRETHREN
OF THE
HARTFORD PULPIT.

THE ISLES OF SHOALS IN SUMMER TIME.

THE Isles of Shoals appear at their fairest if you approach them on a bright, sunshiny day, sailing some ten or twelve miles outward from old Portsmouth, in a steamer which leaves that pleasant little city every morning and every afternoon. I remember when it was not so easy and so cheery a way thither: for when I used to go down in the summer time to the Shoals, as they are called for short, there lay at the foot of State street the little sloop Sibyl, which ran daily, "wind and weather permitting." The wind and weather used to permit the run to be favorable one way, but were very likely to "go back" on you the other way. If you had a good run out, you were likely to have a calm coming back, and of all the mischances which can befall him who goes to sea for pleasure, a calm is the worst. For in the first place there is no progress forward or backward; and a good head-wind has some motion in it even if it does take you the wrong way. In the next place night is likely to come upon you and leave you bedless, supperless, and cold; in the next place, the toiling with oars to propel a sloop of twenty tons is exhilarating neither to the rowers nor the onlookers; and lastly, of all places favorable for sea-sickness, the best is that lazy roll of the sea in a calm;

a man who can stand a stiff gale will succumb to the deep ground swell. So it is with great delight that a yearly visitor to the Shoals, as I have been for fifteen summers, should hail such a sign of progress, as the substitution of a fine steamer, two of them in fact, for that lazy-going sloop of the past. Once it was an event of significance when a dozen went out ; now it is not uncommon to take out three hundred in a single day ; and you no sooner disembark from the Eastern Railroad train at Portsmouth depot than the shouts of "Carriage for the Shoals boat" remind you that the little decaying city by the sea derives no small part of its present commerce as an *entrepôt* for the Isles of Shoals.

You embark in the snug and admirable little steamer, and find yourself among very genteel and well-appointed tourists, all bound for those fairy-like islands out in the Atlantic. And as you run down the Piscataqua you might almost fancy yourself on a Scotch or Swiss lake were it not for the trifling lack of mountains. Certainly for vivid greenness of grass plats, and clean rocky edge of shore, and fantastic cleavages in the granite coast, and distant and almost enchanting views among the islands of Portsmouth harbor, and the quaint aspect of the picturesque old city, and the trim, governmental neatness and precision of the Navy Yard, and the half ruins of the forts at the mouth of the river, pretending to guard it from invaders, and the utter ruins of the earthworks, thrown up there in 1812, now grass grown, and rounded, and pleasant, I know of no steamer ride in the United States more delightful. The current of the Piscataqua sweeps you down with the speed of seven miles an hour if the tide is outward, or stems it with the

same speed if it is inward, and tosses up all sorts of fantastic eddies, and miniature maelstroms, along the narrow channel. Once past the mouth of the river, away out on the eastern horizon, you descry a low broken line, generally half concealed in the haze, apparently "without form and void," which you are told is the Isles of Shoals. Ten miles away they offer as little promise as a New Hampshire pasture. But as you approach them, and leave behind you Newcastle light and the pretty and trim Whale Rock light, on a solitary rock just large enough to support it, the hazy line out on the eastern horizon begins to be broken up into fragments; and bye-and-bye a few houses, two enormous hotels, a tiny church, a light house, several schooners at anchor, and a group of rocks, emerge out of the tangle, and you have the Isles of Shoals before you.

Now I fully admit that you must see these in a sunny light, or else they are nothing, and worse than nothing; and I have a friend, who, because he went in a rainstorm and returned in a rainstorm, believes that there is no place on the globe more forlorn and empty of all interest than those same islands. And when I remind him that I go thither yearly, he asks, is not life hard enough, and dreary enough, any way, without adding to it by going down to the Isles of Shoals? Ah! sunshine is every thing; in the world outside of us, and in the world inside of us, and you want sunshine of course to make the Shoals pleasant. But given sunshine, and the place is just glorified. What do you ask better for a few days than a clean little island out at sea, with no dust, with the thermometer nailed at 70, a fine breeze every day, and that breeze, let it come from N., E., S., or W., laden with the ocean's coolness,

springing up in the morning after breakfast, and going down with the sun, leaving all still for the evening stroll, or the quiet chat on the hotel piazza, the island on which you live being but a seven minutes' walk from end to end, and a four minutes' walk from side to side ; the whole of clean granite, intersected with a basaltic dyke, and the shores rent and shattered into a thousand forms, with crags, and gullies, and gentle slopes, and tiny beaches, and great scattered rocks, which dash the waves into ten thousand foamy torrents ; and little nestling pools, where the sea-life unfolds itself in its clear and transparent beauty ; and where you can sit for hours, and watch the plants and the creatures which thrive in those crystal basins ? And then to lie on those high rocks, sixty feet above the ocean, and look out seaward and watch the play of color on the water, as the clouds flit between the sun and the sea, and the multitudinous gleam of the sails from a hundred yachts and all manner of sailing craft which go by, is to have all the joy of an ocean voyage, without any of its dangers or its discomforts. And then the old historical associations which cluster round these isles, from the day of Capt. John Smith who discovered them and gave them his name—the original John Smith, of Pocahontas memory, and whose marble monument still graces one of the group—and all these 250 years and more of history, during which these islands have been full of life, and adventure, of tragedy and comedy, of culture and refinement, at one time, and then at another of savagery and barbarism ; and then the scene of to-day, with the numbers of intelligent people gathered there to enjoy this all, and to sit on the rocks in leisurely contentment, and talk together, not

about the Shoals alone, but about life, these varied experiences of ours, these hopes and expectations, these isles of the fancy which lie out yonder in the horizon of our thought, in the sunshine, and which we long to reach and have translated to clear visions and to blessedness,—Oh, all this to see and to enjoy is what you find at the Isles of Shoals.

There are several islands of the group; but from the hotel point of view there are only two: Appledore and Star. Of these Appledore is the larger and contains somewhat over four hundred acres, while Star has but about a hundred and fifty. I always go to Star; partly because it is roamed over with less fatigue, partly because it is more open to the grand southeastern swell, partly because one of the best hotels in the United States stands upon it, partly because its historical relics are the most noteworthy, and partly because I always have stopped there; beginning with the Old Atlantic House, famous for its chowders, its fried fish, and its doughnuts, and ending with the splendid and sumptuous Oceanic, with all its modern splendors. Star island reveals the secret of its name—it is star-shaped; and so if you want to walk a little way or a long way, you may have your own way, and reach some sequestered cove in a minute, or some projecting point, after a ramble which is not insignificant. I have often been on Appledore, a favorite place for some, but the distances are rather too magnificent, and I am always glad to get back to dear, cosy Star again.

The names of the group are not without interest and significance. Appledore, now so nobly called, did not always wear so euphonious a title, and even in the mouths of the na-

tive Shoalers, it bear its old name Hog Island, doubtless given from the resemblance to a hog's back which has been noticed in landscape all through history, and an instance of which the schoolboy will recall in the Anabasis. Another island delights in the name of Smutty Nose, from the thick coat of sea weed which adorns its shores. Another is called White Island, from its color. Another is Duck Island, and the swarm of gulls hovering over it reveals the slight mystery of the name. Cedar and Malaga, bring back the time when Spanish ships were wrecked on these rough shores, and yielded up their treasures : and all the others have some bit of local history or coloring. There are nine of them as I remember them, but most of the nine are quite insignificant. They differ from each other though, in some particulars which I have noticed, but cannot explain. At Londoner's, for example, I have found shells and sand and on that island alone : at White Island there are beautiful pebbles, wonderfully clear and varied : on Star there are neither pebbles nor sand. There is probably a cause for this ; but I have not been able to find it out.

What was the original reason of these islands being called the Isle of Shoals it is impossible now to tell. For a long time it was supposed that Egg Island, near Nahant, was so called because of its oval shape ; later, because of the number of gull's eggs found upon it by the casual visitor ; and later still, the true reason was hit upon, that it was called Egg Island because it was *laid* there. I have already mentioned that the Shoals first bore the name of their discoverer, Capt. John Smith ; and on the oldest map of New England they are set down as Smith's Isles. They might have been called Shoals,

from the vast "Shoals" or schools of fish, mackerel and cod, which have from time immemorial been found in those waters ; but more probably from the shoalness of the ocean thereabout. In fact, between the islands and the main land, there is not water enough for a first-class ship to sail without peril, and even in the little Sibyl, years ago, I have knocked against the bottom in the most alarmingly suggestive manner, while crawling homeward in a fog, and by the aid of ash and beechen sails. And all around the Shoals, (for people there do not use the words the Isles of Shoals, but simply Shoals,) there are reefs of thinly covered rocks which are full of danger. Some bear names, such as Shag, Mingo, Anderson Rock, Square Rock, but many are not named, and are only revealed by the suspicious curl of white over them when the swell comes in from the ocean, telling the story of resistance a few feet below the surface, whose only sign is the cresting foam. But it is a dangerous place for navigation ; and so in all the past, wrecking has been a great business among the Shoalers, and many a proud ship has been hurled against those rocks to perish. On the low dangerous coast of Smutty Nose, within the memory of the oldest people, the fine Spanish ship Sagunto went to pieces ; and to-day, one of the most affecting sights of the islands is the long row of graves where lie the bodies of those shipwrecked men. Away, far away from home, they found tender and Christian burial at the hands of another race ; and there so far away from their kindred they sleep side by side. No inscription marks the place ; a little rough piece of granite at the head of each grave is the only monument. Near them sleep the generations that have lived on

that island, which is now in the hands of the little remnant of Shoalers who survive. Three or four old brown, weather-beaten houses stand together on the island, one of which has a pathetic interest as the scene of the Wagner murder three or four years ago, whose details I will not recapitulate : but the largest one of the group has a ceaseless interest to me in connection with a certain old Captain Haley, who lived in it, and who, in his day, was a man of mark and power ; one of those natural heroes whom God raises up in every community, men born to command. I suppose that they who were his contemporaries, and who used to call him Old King Haley, did not see in him the ruler so much as the tyrant ; and I have no doubt that like some few other men, whom I have known or heard of, he had his natural human weaknesses ; but his record, as it comes to us to-day, is a singularly fine one. That Old King Haley has been to me for many years, one of those men whom I have set up in my heart to honor ; and finding his gravestone fallen over a few years ago, I had it re-set and made comely, out of the great regard I bear him. For in that southeastern second story window of his house, a fine mansion in his day, and notable even in its present decline, he placed all the years of his active life, an oil lamp, to serve as a tiny lighthouse, and many a ship has known Capt. Haley's warning, and sheered off from the dangerous shore just in time. With that infernal propensity which men have to ascribe the best acts to bad motives, there are old Shoalers living to-day, who dare to say that King Haley did that thing to lure ships to destruction, that he might profit by the wreckage ; but I can't match so devilish a proceeding with the rest of his life. For on the

little island which is a kind of side spur to Smutty Nose, and which bears the name of Malaga, old Samuel Haley, with infinite toil and patience, constructed a tiny dock, in which a small schooner can lie, quite beyond the dash of the sea, and be in perfect security ; and in my old boating days, it was a very tranquil place to steal into and rest, when I spent long summer weeks sailing round and round the islands. Its walls are all well laid ; and the courses of stone retain their old smoothness and finish, and they are the best monuments of "King Haley." But on his grave-stone, I found this inscription :

In memory of Mr. Samuel Haley, who died in the year 1811, aged 84.

He was a man of great Ingenuity, Industry, Honour and Honesty, true to his Country, and A man who did A great Publick good in Building A Dock and Receiving into his Enclosure many a poor Distressed Seaman and Fisherman in distress of Weather.

I wish we might all be worthy of such an epitaph. When our lives are ended and the sum of all our deeds is declared, shall all that we have done be equal to what that good man did down in those rocky islands, of whom it is said he built a dock as a great public good ? Happy is the man whose life's work is the equal of old Samuel Haley.

His descendants still cling to the islands ; or rather have done so till within a year or two ; but those old names, Haley, Randall, and Caswell, will soon be lost forever to those rock which gave to their ancestors their homes.

And that name Caswell makes me stop and think of that good and true man whom I was proud to call my friend, whose death, but three years ago, I still mourn as a fresh grief. I found him years ago, on these islands, a most modest, diffi-

dent kind of a man, whom every one called Origen, for there are no Mist'ers on the islands, and every one is known by his Christian name. Origen Caswell was one of the bravest, truest men I ever met; and I have often wished that Mrs. Stowe or Mrs. Whitney had seen him that they might make him famous. At a time when drinking and brawling were universal among the Shoalers, Origen was an example of temperance and quietness; trusted by all and loved by all. In his later years he kept a small hotel, called the Gosport House; and in a village where bars were kept even in private houses, Origen would not have a drop sold, even in his hotel. I have sailed with him time after time, hours and days, but I never heard an impure nor a hasty word from his lips. I always used to think that he was worthy to bear the name of Origen; and that that good old Church Father would not have been ashamed of the man who so many centuries after him should wear his name. And although the character of the Shoalers was a most unlovely one, and in some respects they were the most like barbarians of any men whom I have ever known in civilized lands, I yet think that Origen Caswell was one of the noblest men I ever saw. I cannot criticise Dickens for taking little Nell out of one of the most degraded parts of London; for I have seen a man, whose superior I have never met in moral worth and in spiritual attractiveness, come to his full manly bloom among those rough and degraded islanders.

For being left alone, out there in the ocean, drink had full sway among them, and fightings and neighborhood quarrels were of daily occurrence. They had no great public interests, and so their little private interests were so magnified as to shut

off the view of all else. In swearing, these Shoalers have long had an undisputed pre-eminence; and the aim and end of their intellectual proficiency were seen in the ingenuity with which new oaths could be coined. He who could swear the hardest was the best fellow. But they were not quite forgotten by the Christian world; and for a long time a missionary dwelt among them, trying to do them some good, and succeeding to a certain extent in humanizing them and bringing them under religious impressions. You will find the names of some of the good men who have lived and labored there, graven on the somewhat pretentious tomb-stones which mark the spot where they lie; and it is in keeping with the character of the population amid which they labored that they were sent out there by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the *Indians* of North America. When the *Indians* became scarce, it seems to have been taken for granted that the people next to them in point of savagery were the inhabitants of the Isles of Shoals.

I remember calling on one of the last of the missionaries who have lived there. He was not in, but his wife received me, and told me the story of their discouragements. Religion had touched the lowest point in the church, and the gospel got not even a hearing. "True," she said "there are plenty of sistren who come to meetin', but not a bretheren ever comes." And I remember that when I first knew the Shoals, fifteen years ago, and visitors had not begun to crowd the little stone church on the hill, during divine service the men would go in, while a committee waited on the rocks outside, spy-glass in hand, scouring the horizon; and if a black spot on the sea

indicated a school of mackerel coming to the surface, a low whistle was made on the fingers, and the worshippers within rose and withdrew, somewhat as firemen would if they should hear the alarm while they were in the house of God (if so strong a figure be admissible as a fireman being found within a church). This withdrawal used to be winked at by the good missionaries as a "work of necessity or mercy."

Of these missionaries, the one whose name is the most familiar to me is that of the excellent Dr. Beebe, whose hold on the islanders was most wholesome. He was a kind of king among them, for his good sense, excellent temper, and superior education gave him a natural right to rule. He exercised more functions than I have ever seen combined in any other human being, not to mention that he was, so far as the Isles of Shoals were concerned, as infallible as the Pope of Rome. I have forgotten all the titles he bore, and all the public duties he discharged, but some of them occur to me, and I will endeavor to set them down, with no more exaggerations than most historians are guilty of. Mr. Beebe was, in the first place, and par eminence, the minister; in the next place, he was the doctor, involving, of course, surgery and dentistry; and in order to qualify himself the better for these duties, he left the islands for two winters and pursued regular studies in the medical school of Harvard University. In the next place, he was the lawyer, being called in to act as umpire in disputes, to draw legal documents, and settle questions of equity. Of course he was a justice of the peace. He was also the teacher of the school; and since there was no person competent to examine his qualifications, he was the school committee too.

As the islands were represented in the New Hampshire Legislature, he was chosen to go to "General Court." As the islands are also a United States port, he was the collector of revenue; also inspector of customs; also United States Commissioner. As there was a gun on the island to bring possible smugglers to terms, he was the commandant of the military forces, and naval officer as well. Besides this, and keeping the only apothecary shop, being selectman, general letter-writer, and the father of a family, his time was tolerably well occupied. I used to think that the Shoalers might change Watts's well-known line to this:

How doth the little busy Beebe
Improve each shining hour,

and have it just as true as the original strain. And yet, poor man, there is a pathos connected with him too; for as you walk over the ledge of Star Island you come across a tiny hollow, where in a space not eight feet square a little burial lot has been framed in, and a pair of marble doves and a suitable inscription tell you of that good man's household broken by death and two sweet children snatched away. After that the father fled from the place, and he has seldom been there since.

I spoke a few moments ago of the gorgeous hotel bearing the stately and cosmopolitan name of the Oceanic, which now occupies a not inconsiderable part of Star Island, and looms up with its lofty storeys and central position so as to dominate the whole group. From the Boston or New York point of view it is certainly a success; and whether in beds, or electric signals, or grand piano, or spacious dining hall, or noble pi-

azzas, or spacious corridors, or billiard and bowling alleys, or elegantly appointed tables, with their perfect galaxy of waiters, it has few, if any, superiors; yet I think that, even in all its elegance and solid comfort, I recall the old times, and the quaint taverns, and the heavy living, and the superb fish fare, with a kind of sigh. Would I go back to them? I hardly think it. Yet it is the fashion to mourn over the past, and to declare that when it went out all good went out, and the merry times departed. I will not join this caravan of mourners, except to say that the memory of those times fills me with a sense that they ought to have been pleasant, and that they really were pleasant. There was no style, no fashion, no excess of dress and ornamentation. People went out to the Shoals to enjoy the ocean and the rocks, not to waste the summer and criticise one another. Among the crowds which frequent the Oceanic, you not infrequently meet some who have never taken the pains to walk out and see and hear the dashings of the sea, and who pass days and weeks unconscious of the majesty which is not a quarter of a mile away. This very summer, while the surge was playing over a range of forty feet between the most outward turning point and the topmost line of the granite slope, and when the sound was like thunder, and the crash, and the roar, and the gathering volume of the returning waves, and the boiling foam, and the myriad tongues of water which lapped up into all the crevices, and the blue and green waves which were slowly coming in with the wriggle of a huge serpent, all held me fascinated hour after hour, there were many who had no care for these things, and never got beyond the sheltered piazza and the pages of an unbound

novel. But not so was it in the olden time; we went to see and to enjoy. And then, after a half day on the rocks, or out with the fishermen, taking in the cod and mackerel, a hundred in a half day, we returned to the Atlantic House, how good it was to see the heavily laden tables which good Dame Caswell spread three times a day before her uncritical and ravenous guests. I once pulled out a scrap of paper and a pencil and jotted down the various items of one of those old-time breakfasts—a bill of fare which I retain to the present hour, and which I will transcribe for your entertainment. It was as follows: Fried fish, potatoes, boiled eggs, brown bread, hot biscuits, huckleberry cakes, corn bread, crackers, doughnuts, cookies, cream cakes, gold cake, two kinds of pies, cheese, tea and coffee. The supper was the same as the breakfast; I need only write ditto, ditto, to describe it. The dinner had all that the breakfast and supper had, only more—incomparable chowders, lobsters right from the sea, meats of various kinds, fish served in various ways, at least four kinds of pies and divers varieties of puddings. You saw at a glance that the Isles of Shoals lay within the geographical limits of Perpetual Pie; and if you escaped without dyspepsia, it was the abundant exercise and the sea air which saved you. After seeing a valued friend eat two plates of chowder, two of fish, one of meat, four of pie, and one of pudding, I have simply been amazed at a climate which could let him off alive. Yet he seemed to thrive under the treatment, and came away pounds heavier than he went.

I have spoken of the uncouth and almost savage character of the old Shoalers, whose race is now so nearly extinct. But

they were not all of this pattern, and I remember that Mrs. Thaxter, in her delightful Atlantic Monthly article, which afterwards ripened into her charming book on the Isles of Shoals, spoke of a village beauty, so blithe and bonny, with so bright an eye, and so fair a cheek, and so trim a figure, and so graceful a bearing, that I was fain to see the possessor of so many graces. So happening at the Shoals the very August when her article came out, I wondered who it was that was worthy of so high an encomium. I read it over to Origen Caswell, who said at once that it must be "Jim Randall's wife," but he added, "Celia Thaxter has been laying it on rather thick; Cele was always given to coloring a little." Still, he confessed that "Miss Randall" was pretty; there was no doubt of that. There was to be that evening a little fair down in one of the old fish houses; would I like to look in and see these people and buy something to help them out in keeping the school this winter? Of course I would; and at the hour of early candle light I dropped in and looked over the slight assortment of bead work, and shell work, and fish-bone work and socks, and what might by a strong figure be called fancy work. Origen was there, but he whispered that the fair lady whom I sought had not yet come. Presently a brown-cheeked young woman came in, fresh looking and healthy, and comely, but not in my judgment quite sustaining Mrs. Thaxter's description, yet Origen's nods and shrugs conveyed to me pretty clearly that that was she. She took her stand behind a wash tub filled with lemonade, of which I partook, at a moderate cost. But I found Mrs. Randall quite shy of conversation, and when I told her that I had had a great desire to see her

on account of a description of her in the Atlantic Monthly, she said not a word; and when I repeated it, she simply remarked that she didn't take that newspaper. Then I tried to impress upon her that the Atlantic Monthly was the *ne plus ultra* of American letters; and that to be even mentioned in it was an honor which some people would think worth while waiting for years to gain. No response; a glum silence. Then I told her that this Atlantic Monthly, why the Atlantic Monthly is what the most distinguished men in the world write for, Mr. Tennyson, Mr. Emerson, Mr. Longfellow. "Don't know the gentlemen," quoth she in reply; "guess they must be stopping at the other island." After that I thought it best to cease praising the Atlantic Monthly and I told her that Mrs. Thaxter had written the article. That time I missed it still more widely. Mrs. Thaxter, the brilliant poet, was to her, simply Cele Thaxter, and my beauty curled her short lip quite disdainfully at the idea of such praise being worth much. But she became more communicative by and by, especially after she found that I had once been the pastor of that North Church in Portsmouth, whose spire, hard on two hundred feet high, was the Shoalers invariable landmark in their fishing excursions, and I found that to have been the minister of a church with such a steeple, was worth more in that latitude than to be Mr. Tennyson, Mr. Emerson, or Mr. Longfellow. And it was quite beautiful and touching when I closed the conversation with this island beauty, and she said to me in a very modest and faltering way: Would you—object—to lend me—that paper—for a day—to read—it—to—my husband? I gladly put the Atlantic into her hand, and

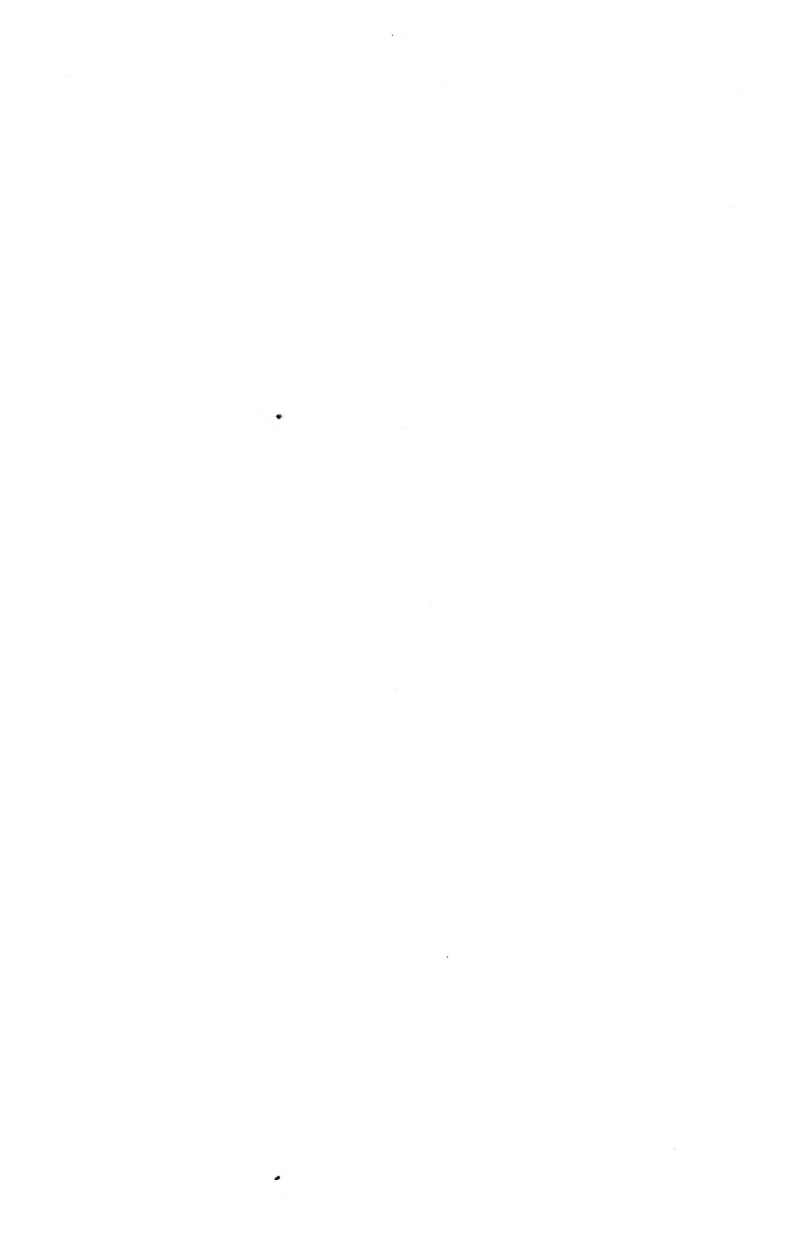
was rewarded by the sweetest of smiles. Poor woman, she lost that gallant husband of hers not long after, drowned, as so many Shoalers are ; and she has drifted away quite out of my knowledge. For when the new hotel was built, the proprietor bought up the whole Island, the town of Gosport included ; and the Shoalers left their tiny brown houses, and wandered forth, and now Gosport is but a great hotel with its outlying houses. The proprietor and his sons, and a few permanent servants, nine in all, are the only voters and they have the privilege of sending a representative to the New Hampshire Legislature, and of exercising all the functions that the good Mr. Beebe ministered of yore.

There is no bathing practicable at the Shoals, for the water is so cold that it cuts you like a knife. There are no oysters, but plenty of lobsters and I know not how many kinds of fish. There *are* a few mosquitoes, but so far as my experience goes they are a stingless kind, their bark is worse than their bite. I have suffered so little from them that I acknowledge their existence only in deference to the sternest truth. But with this drawback, I know of no other—save hotel bills, and those do not trouble the most of the visitors long, seldom more than two or three days. At the end of that time they generally cease, especially with married men and the heads of families. There are no trees on the islands, but there is no lack of bushes, and if your imagination works energetically enough, there is no reason why a huckleberry bush should not be as imposing as an oak. There is little sickness on the islands, probably in part because it is very healthy there, and partly because there are very few inhabitants ; but even there it is

plain that death has gone before you, and one of the most impressive surprises which you can have in your life will come upon you when in wandering over Star Island you suddenly notice the tiny bits of granite turned up on the edge, and discover by the proximity of two more pretentious monuments, that you are treading on the dust of the dead. Very little soil is there on the islands, hardly enough to cover a body; but what there is has been carefully removed for the purposes of burial. I once had the good fortune to buy the only cleared field on the island, it was about as large as the land covered by an old fashioned country meeting house. I meant to build some day a tiny little summer cottage on it, but I never dared to dig it up, lest I should find it full of bones, for the time was when the population of the Isles of Shoals was measured by the hundreds and not by tens, and every inch of soil on the islands must be mixed with human dust.

There is already a literature of itself, relating to the Shoals, but he who has read Mrs. Thaxter's little book, Mr. Hawthorne's kindly reminiscences of Appledore and Mr. Leighton, in his American Notebooks, and James Russell Lowell's and Mrs. Thaxter's poems, needs little more to fill the romance and appreciate the beauty of this thronged resort. Most of those who have written, have confined themselves to Appledore, and the beauties of the rival island have never had worthy telling. But they are all fair to see, and pleasant to remember. And as my mind goes back to the slender shaft on White Island, with its strong light, which nightly does so well what Capt. Haley's lamp attempted so worthily, and I think of that little gem around whose white crests the ocean is

always dashing up a still whiter crest of foam, and my mind's eye then runs north to Londoner's, lying in the line of the sunset's glow, and as still farther away the shores of Rye and Hampton glitter in the morning with the flash from the many windowed hotels, or lie peaceful and low in the evening's paler light; and then my eye wanders from the high land of Star to the great bulk of Appledore, and its fantastic and quaint hotel, the germ of which can still be seen to have been Mr. Leighton's plain house, now grown into the grand congeries of buildings, which so many hundreds remember with pleasure, and then between Star and Appledore the black coast of Smutty Nose, and its blacker houses, and Cedar, low and flat, and Malaga, so tiny as not to be quite made out by itself, and still northward, past Appledore, the dark crags of Duck Island, with their unceasing crest of foam, and the birds hovering over it, as they bring in fishes to feed their young, all this is a beautiful picture to look at, a great refreshment to have hung up before the mind's eye. It is but a few weeks in the year that these islands are presentable. Summer is as short there as she is beautiful, and the sunshine which falls there after September comes is joyless and cold. But from June to September, they who want the sea at its fairest, will find it there, and though there are grander scenes than these, there are few more placid and romantic, few more tenderly remembered.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 984 866 4